

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Pittsburgh, Pa.

125th Anniversary Year

John R. Bucher, Pastor

Esther W. Herwig, Organist and Director

Kenneth Griffin, Acolyte

3rd Sunday after Trinity June 27, 1971

ORGAN PRELUDES

a) "Andante from the 9th Sonata" by Merkel

b) "Pastorale Allegretto" by Gambini

MEDITATION - "Guide Me O Thou Great

Jehovah" by Hastings

* SOLEMN ANNOUNCEMENT

* CALL TO WORSHIP

M. Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy:

C. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

* GLORIA PATRI

* COLLECT for the 3rd Sunday after Trinity

HYMN #184 - "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind"

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Epistle - I Peter 5:1-11

Gospel - Luke 15:1-10

* DOXOLOGY

* STATEMENT OF FAITH

(Inside the front cover of your hymnal)

SILENT PRAYER and PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER RESPONSE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY - "Chansonette" by Rasley

OFFERING PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFERENCE REPORT by Mrs. Estella Haase

* HYMN #295 - "The Church's One Foundation"

SERMON - "Teach Us to Pray"

Text - Luke 11:1

LORD'S PRAYER

* HYMN #59 - "O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

* BENEDICTION and THREEFOLD AMEN

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

POSTLUDE - "March in C" by Guilmant

(* - congregation standing)

Our altar flowers are placed in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schrempf and their daughter, Catherine, by the family.

SUNDAY JUNE 27th

11:45 A.M. Short congregational meeting to discuss the two items mentioned in the church letter you received this past week.

7:30 P.M. Planning meeting for our Vacation Bible School at St. Paul's.

MONDAY JUNE 28th

7:00 P.M. Anniversary Book and Publicity Committee at the church.

THURSDAY JULY 1st

8:00 P.M. First meeting of the Joint Committee from St. Peter's and St. Paul's congregations at St. Paul's Church. Rev. Paul Westcoat is the convener. Our representatives are Paul Aloyi, Clarence Lyons, and Allen Stepnick, with Carl Weissbart as the alternate member. We will look forward to their report.

Last Sunday, June 20th, Mercersburg Association of Penn Central Conference licensed and installed Ralph Link in Trinity Charge. His address is: Mr. Ralph C. Link, P.O. Box #174, New Bloomfield, Pa. 17068. We extend congratulations to Ralph and to his mother, Mrs. Minnie Link.

The pastor and Mrs. Bucher thank you for the surprise reception and gifts last Sunday morning. They were deeply appreciated.

TRINITY CHARGE--THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Ralph C. Link, Pastor

Trinity Church, New Bloomfield 9:00 A.M.
Christ Church, Duncannon 10:30 A.M.

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP July 4, 1971

The Organ Prelude

*The Hymn of Praise 43

*The Call to Worship

*The Prayer of Confession (Unison)

Help your people, our Father, to be truly penitent, empower us to overcome all our temptations, enable us faithfully to live according to your will, and create within us a growing likeness to Jesus Christ our Lord. Forgive us, O Lord, and may we henceforth love thee as we ought. For all the wrong we have done our fellowmen; for unkind words and untruthful speech, for loss of temper and irritating conduct, for neglect of charity and failure in justice, for arrogant pride and contempt of the lowly, forgetfulness of others' pain and advantage taken of others' weakness; for whatever any person may rightfully hold against us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Kyrie

*The Assurance of Pardon

The Scripture---II Corinthians 3

*The Gloria Patri

Anthem (Trinity)

Pastoral Prayer

Announcements

The Receiving of Tithes and Offerings

*The Doxology

*The Offering Prayer and Lord's Prayer

The Hymn of Meditation 441

The Sermon---"Religious Freedom"

The Sermon Prayer

*The Hymn of Response 443

*The Benediction

*The Threefold Amen

*The Postlude

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are planning to observe the Lord's Supper next Sunday morning at both churches.

TRINITY CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mite Society will meet on Thursday July 8th at 2:00 P.M. at the home of Mrs. Rynk.

CHRIST CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Men's Brotherhood will have the service at Kincora Home this afternoon at 2:00 P.M.

Anyone who would like to donate blood to replace the blood given to Mrs. Achenbach may make this donation at the Polyclinic Hospital. Just let them know that it is given on her behalf. She is in room 149 of the Main Bldg.

The Congregation is cordially invited to the wedding of Patricia Ann Shatto and Richard G. Dobyms on Saturday July 10, 1971 at 2:00 P.M.

Religious Freedom

NATIONAL Holiday
(4TH JULY)

Text: 2 Cor. 3:17 B

Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

2 Cor

In a few days we will celebrate what is known as independence day. Or the fourth of July as it has come to be known. We all know the story behind this day and how the American nation became free on the 4th of July. We need not therefore go into this story because it is mainly a history lesson and not a religious one. But as our thoughts are turned toward independence, let us think about another type of independence or freedom. Religious freedom. Now is this the religious freedom guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

But before we get into this let us backtrack a bit in our Scripture and define just what it is Paul is talking about when he refers to Moses.

If we go back to the 34th chapter of Exodus we find that Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the stone tablets in his hands and his face shone and was radiant after speaking to God. When Aaron and the leaders and the Israelites saw him they were afraid and would not come near to him. But he called out to them and they recognized him as Moses and came up to him. Then Moses would tell them all that he had been told by God. After he finished speaking he put a veil over his face so that they could no longer see the radiance shining there. But Paul tells us that the reason Moses covered his face was because the radiance was going to fade and Moses did not want the Israelites to see the fading of what had to fade. Paul then points out several things about the veil. He says that the Jews listen to the Scripture which ^{is} ~~was~~ the Old Testament every Sabbath in the Synagogue and there is a veil over their eyes which keeps them from seeing the truth and the real meaning of it. What he is saying is that the Scriptures should point them to Jesus Christ but the veil keeps them from seeing this. Then he goes on to say that the veil is still there and will remain there until they see the risen Lord and accept Him.

Perhaps we may ponder how Paul would know all this about the Jews. But we must

remember that Paul was first and foremost a Jew. In fact when he had his conversion experience he felt compelled to try to reach the Jews first and then the Gentiles. Every city that he visited he went first to the Synagogue to speak. Since he was a stranger he was permitted to speak and after he launched into his message of Jesus Christ he was usually expelled from the premises. Then he would try to reach the Gentiles of that city. But the strange thing is that in almost all of the Synagogues there were some Jews who were less strict in their religion and these Jews would secretly come to the other meetings which Paul conducted in that city. In fact some of them would travel to nearby cities when they knew Paul would be there. So you see Paul's message was not completely lost on his Jewish brothers. But Paul did not speak too kindly of the Jews who remained strictly orthodox. Then Paul goes on to say that Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. This freedom contains three basic ingredients. They are hope, joy and love.

The hope of this freedom is that God is there to care for us at all times. Those who do not believe in God do not have this hope. Have you ever heard an atheist express his views on immortality? If you have you know that they say very emphatically that when you die you are dead. But the Christian does not believe this and as proof we can point to Christ and say that is what I believe. We also have the hope of our sins being forgiven. And again we point to Jesus as our example. Can you picture what life would be without this hope? I believe that life would be miserable all the time. Perhaps this is why those who are atheistic and cynical toward religion are so sour. Their outlook is so narrow and hope is small. But the Christian has a broad, wide outlook on life. He can have hope for the present and hope for the future. This is the hope that we have in the Lord. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness: I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand. These beautiful words of a familiar hymn express the hope that is ours with the freedom of Christ.

The joy of this freedom is that we are able to live in the hustle bustle of this world and still be joyful. We can be pressed on all sides by trife and struggle. We can be faced with peril, with grief, with the hatred and all the other ills of this life, and yet we can have joy in our hearts. Yes joy. Joy that can only be ours when we have Christ in our lives. When we can say as Job, I know that my redeemer lives. This is the joy of religious freedom. Again it is a joy that is not enjoyed by those who are unbelievers. Those who do not believe in Christ cannot see joy in the hardships of life. Nor can they find joy in the trying circumstances that face them. But the Christian can. It isn't easy to look at life sometimes and be joyful. To be sure, we can't laugh off some of the things that come our way. But if we take time to look at our lot, we can see that we still have the joy of Christ in our hearts. The story is told of ^a the young couple back in the vaudeville days. They were on a tour of one night stands. They had just finished their last show for the night and were standing in the cold drizzling rain in a small town waiting for the bus to take them to their cheap hotel. The store for them was a miserable midnight meal cooked over a small hot plate. Then to bed and up at four A. M. to catch the train to the next small town. As they waited on the corner a sleek black, chauffeur driven limosine drove slowly by. They caught a glimpse of costly furs, jewels and richly dressed people. Looks pretty wonderful doesn't it exclaimed the wife. Yeah it does look wonderful, replied the husband, but don't forget, they can't act." This is sort of like the joy that we have. We can see the people of the world who seem to have more of everything than we have, but many of them are lacking the one ingredient that we have in our lives. We have the joy of knowing that even if we may never be famous or wealthy or world renowned, we have the freedom of the Lord in our lives. The joy of Christ in our hearts. Wealth may vanish, fame may be just a fleeting thing, and empires may crumble, but this joy can never be taken away from us. It is ours through the goodness and mercy of God. He gives it to us freely if we but accept it.

Love is the basic ingredient of this freedom that cannot be understood

by outsiders. They ask, "How can you show love to your enemies, and those who hate you? The answer to this question is not as easy to do as it is to say.

Our answer is that Jesus said this is what we are to do. You have heard me say this before, but we cannot say it often enough. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a Gospel of love. We must learn to love everyone. This includes all of those people we have placed in those neat little compartments of our brains. You know, the group we call communists, the negroes, the catholics, the jews, the Red Chinese, the Viet Cong. All of the groups or individuals we secretly hate or dislike. Jesus said to love them. We cannot recognize them by titles such as communists, or catholics and so on. We must recognize them as being children of God. Our brothers and deserving of our love.

One of the classes I attended at Lancaster a week or so ago was taught by a Prof. Bela Vassady. He teaches Systematic Theology at the seminary. He is a terrific man. He was born in Hungary and received at least part of his education in this country. He made the remark that he graduated from Central Theological Seminary of Dayton Ohio in 1924. Incidentally Rev. Hiack graduated from this same Seminary in 1928. But Dr. Vassady returned to his native Hungary. He taught there and was very active in the Reformed Church there. He came back to America in 1946 when the communists took over Hungary. He returned to Hungary in 1964 for a visit. And he got to see and talk to many of his former students. Most of them he said wanted to talk to him in private, which was impossible because he was watched all the time he was there. But the one remark that he made, that we can all take to heart is what many of the Hungarian people told him. Many of them said, "Sure I belong to the communist party, but that is because I must or I will be in trouble with the authorities. But I am not a communist. I was born a Christian and I will die one. We may be under communist control but we are going to outlove and outhope the communists." Think of it. Here are people who are virtual prisoners in their own homeland. And yet they still can love their rulers and those who are over them. This does not mean to imply that these people can love what the communists stand for and some of the horrible things

they do and have done. But they love the individual for what he is. A creature of God and a fellow brother on this road of life. Just as much deserving of this love of God as anyone. We cannot and must not love the evil or evil ways of some of our brothers either, but we must learn to love them enough that we pray for their forgiveness by God. This is what you and I can do for these people we have compartmentalized in our hearts and minds. Love, love and more love. Each and every day of our lives we need to try that much harder to love someone whom we consider as unlovable. Then and only then can we have the love in our hearts that is ours as a part of this religious freedom.

We can have hope, we can have joy, and we can have love. These are the gifts of God through His son Jesus Christ. They are ^{God's gifts} ~~ours~~ and they are free. In fact it is only when we have them in our hearts and lives that we can be completely free. Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John, "That you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." We have this freedom of religion because we have the truth. And the truth is Jesus Christ. Let us Pray.